

Louisiana Sugar Exchange
Northwest corner North Front and
Bienville Streets
New Orleans
Orleans Parish
Louisiana

HABS No. LA-1110

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36-NEWOR
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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

LOUISIANA SUGAR EXCHANGE

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Address: Northwest corner of North Front and Bienville Streets,
New Orleans, Orleans Parish, Louisiana.

Present Owner: Demolished, summer-winter 1963.

Statement of
Significance: By the middle of the nineteenth century, the
Louisiana sugar industry had become one of the
major economic forces of the state, and in 1882 it
was deemed necessary to create a separate exchange
for the handling of transactions. A charter was
granted on March 6, 1883, and shortly thereafter
the building on North Front and Bienville Streets
was erected.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

- A. Original and Subsequent Owners: The following paragraph
is taken from The Times-Democrat (New Orleans), "The
Sugar Exchange," Tuesday, April 29, 1884, p. 3, col. 4:

"The [newly] created board decided to build, and Messrs.
S. Delgado, E. M. Scott and R. B. Scudder were commis-
sioned to select and negotiate for a site. It being
necessary to locate in the immediate vicinity of the
sugar landing, they were fortunate enough to find a
piece of property exactly suited to the purpose on
Bienville street, running through from North Front to
Clay street, and successfully negotiated its purchase
for the sum of \$18,000 cash and \$850 annually for the
life of the usufructuary, equivalent to \$24,000 for four
lots measuring 100 feet on North Front by 120 on Bienville."

Possession of property about July 1, 1883. A chain of title
has not been traced; however, The Vieux Carré Survey (533
Royal Street, New Orleans 16, Louisiana) may undertake fur-
ther research.

- B. Date of Erection: July 1883 - June 1884.
- C. Architect: James Freret (1839-97).
- D. Builder: Joseph R. Turck, contract made for construction
July 1883 (to be completed February 1, 1884).
- E. Notes on original plan and construction of building: The
April 29, 1884, issue of the Times-Democrat (New Orleans)
quoted above continues with a description of the outstanding
features of the structure:

"The Exchange Hall proper is of magnificent propor-
tions, being 60 x 110 feet and 54 feet high from floor

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to skylight. It is lit on three sides by plate glass windows, 13 x 24 feet, and a skylight 23 feet square. The wing building is 120 x 33 feet, and is two stories high. On the first floor there is a public vestibule, telegraph offices, offices of the Exchange, stair-hall, lavatory and water closets, and a board room. On the second floor a library, 12 x 19, reading-room and museum, 77 x [?], lavatory, etc. and two committee rooms. The ventilation is through the cornice of the skylight, and the acoustics perfect. The entrances to the hall are covered by porches, and a Schillinger pavement has been laid on three sides, and on the yard in the rear as well.

"Great taste has been employed by the architect in both the exterior and interior finish. Free hand ornamentation has been judiciously applied wherever practicable . . . Between the Exchange and the sugar sheds was formerly a triangular islet of city property used as a general dumping ground for worn-out machinery, lumber and trash. This islet the Council set aside for a public park, and appointed its commissioners from the members of the Sugar Exchange, with Hon. Hugh McManus as chairman. On it trees and shrubs have been planted, the surface grassed and walks laid out, and the whole surrounded by a high dressed curb, with a Schillinger banquette at the Bienville street side, the base of the triangle."

- F. Notes on Known Alterations and Additions: The following account of an 1936 "restoration" of the Sugar Exchange is extracted from The Rice, Sugar and Coffee Journal of April 1936, p. 5:

"Restoration of the Louisiana Sugar & Rice Exchange building at New Orleans, Louisiana, situated at Bienville, North Front and Clay streets has just been completed. For the past fifty-three years this building has been the center of the South's great sugar industry. . . . The property where the Louisiana Sugar and Rice Exchange stands was bought from Baron Jean, Dominique, Bruno, Amand, Chaurand of Lyons, France, July 20th., 1883. The terms of the sale were somewhat unusual. The Baron was to receive the sum of \$850.00 a year during the remainder of his life, and upon his death the ground was to become the property of the Exchange. His heirs were to have no claim whatever, but were to consider the property delivered to the Exchange. The Baron lived for thirteen years. The contract was made in 1893, and in 1905 the property was by the terms of the agreement, deeded to the Exchange. The price of the lot therefore stood at \$12,050.00.

"The Exchange building was designed by James Freret, architect, and built by J. R. Turck, contractor, the ground and building exceeded a cost of \$74,753 and was completed and dedicated on June 3, 1884. The building is an impressive structure bounded by Bienville, Front and Clay streets. The floor of the Exchange is 63 feet and 9 inches by 103 feet and 9 inches. The center dome rises to a height of 65 feet and is supported by four massive, fluted Ionic [sic] columns. These columns are of solid pine timbers extending from the base to the beams. It is not likely that any other building in New Orleans has timbers of this size. Furniture of rosewood, mahogany and cypress was made especially for the Exchange 53 years ago. It is prized by the organization for its beauty and excellent workmanship. Rehabilitation of the building has not in any way altered the original design but has insured its preservation for many years to come.

"It was during the prosperous times of the year 1882 when there were more than eleven hundred sugar mills operating in Louisiana that an enterprising group of men felt the need of an exchange. On March 12, 1883 the Louisiana Sugar Exchange was organized.

"Edward J. Gay of St. Louis Plantation, Plaquemine, Louisiana, was its first president."

- G. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: Notarial Archives, Civil Center, Loyola Street, New Orleans, Louisiana.

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